

REPORT

CD NO.

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY Poland

DATE DISTR. 18 Oct 1950

SUBJECT Comments on Political Situation

NO. OF PAGES 3

PLACE
ACQUIREDNO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE ACQUIRE

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

DATE OF _____

50X1-HUM

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE ACT 50 U. S. C. 31 AND 32, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

50X1-HUM

1. During the Spring of 1950, the USSR took active steps to create a ruble block. In terms of the Polish currency, this led to a devaluation of 30% of the zloty vis-a-vis the ruble. The economic results of this event for Poland have been widespread and clearly detrimental. The cost of the goods and commodities which Poland obtains from the USSR immediately jumped considerably. [redacted] Soviet books, for example, now cost twice as much in Poland as before Spring 1950. The situation is far more serious, however, with regard to so basic a commodity as cotton, which Poland formerly imported largely from the US. Since Poland now has to depend on the USSR for much of her cotton imports and as a result of the ruble devaluation has to pay much higher prices for cotton, she has been forced to lower wages of textile workers drastically to maintain the approximate price structure. [redacted] this is but one example of the lowering of Polish wages as a result, direct or indirect, of the creation of the ruble block. 50X1-HUM
2. A loan was granted to Poland by the USSR in July 1950. [redacted] it was designed to offset some of the most drastic results of the situation described above. 50X1-HUM
3. Very significantly, the mood even of Polish Communists has undergone a marked change in recent months. As Poles, and even as Communists, they have come to realize that the USSR has begun to embark upon a colonial policy of exploitation in Poland. One of the high-standing Communist Party members, [redacted] Wolski, told a good friend this last spring, "You know that during the day I am a very rabid and vociferous Stalinist. During the night I begin to wonder whether I am a Titoist or Trotskyite." At the same time, these high-ranking Polish Communists understand that Titoism is an impossibility in Poland because that country is surrounded on all sides by Soviet-dominated areas. 50X1-HUM

CLASSIFICATION SECRET/US OFFICIALS ONLY

[illegible]

SECRET/US OFFICIALS ONLY

50X1-HUM

- 2 -

4. Wladyslaw Wolski, Minister of Public Administration, who only recently made an agreement with the Catholic Church and apparently had been successful from the Communist point of view, was recently dismissed from his high office. Although a long-time Communist, he apparently presented a threat to the Stalinist clique because of his former association with Gomulka in the administration of the Western territories. At present, he is believed to hold a very minor position and, like Gomulka, to fear an arrest at almost any time.
5. Since Communist regimes don't seem to be able to exist very long without show trials, the Poles are once again readying a new victim for a big political show. He is [redacted] Vice Minister of Agriculture Kowalewski. He was arrested some months ago although he had agreed to submit his resignation. The Public Prosecutor has spread the word that the investigation will take a long time. [redacted] Kowalewski will [redacted] 50X1-HUM
fess to anything. It is interesting that the Polish public is convinced of the absolute falsehood of all that is said in such show trials. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
[redacted], certain half truths are used at these trials but the public has absolutely no confidence in the political atmosphere in which all these trials take place. Kowalewski is probably no more dangerous to the Stalinist group than many similar officials. [redacted] he has been chosen for his present 50X1-HUM
sorry role because he was connected with the Polish Government in London. (He was Provincial Governor of Warsaw on behalf of the government in exile.) It would be easy, therefore, to implicate him in connection with the British Information Service.
6. Despite the anti-Soviet atmosphere in Poland, which apparently extends even into Communist circles, Soviet propaganda has not been without some success. Although people understand the real meaning of Soviet peace propaganda and jokingly call the Soviets peacemongers, they lend their ears to the following argument: In the event of an open conflict between the US and the USSR, Poland will be far behind the actual battleground and may, in fact, benefit economically.
7. [redacted] a psychological reorientation in Poland 50X1-HUM
towards a certain passivity regarding a new war. Some Poles [redacted] 50X1-HUM
[redacted] seem to reflect upon World War II as an example of the senselessness of opposition to armed aggression. They seem to think that under the circumstances it will be better for Poles to stand aside and let the big powers fight among themselves if they must. The only exception to this attitude, presumably, can be found in their views on the German problem; probably Poles would not hesitate to fight a German army and occupy Germany.
8. The attitude of large groups of violently anti-Soviet Poles toward the US is not necessarily one of friendship and trust. [redacted] a speech by Acheson relayed by the Voice of America which appealed to Polish patriotism vis-a-vis the USSR but which received a poor reception by the Polish public. Many Poles unhappily seem to fear that the US would like them to commit national suicide for the Western cause. 50X1-HUM
9. Soviet propaganda has quite cleverly exploited some popular sentiment in favor of a variety of social reforms which are loosely described as socialism. Whereas the Soviets have had a hard time finding acceptance of collectivization among all but the most rabid Polish Communists, the widespread program to establish health resorts for workers and peasants, state care for children, establishment of village libraries and other steps designed to eliminate illiteracy, and similar measures have been rather popular. Soviet propaganda insists that the US would eradicate every trace of this program if it gained any influence in Polish affairs, and would reestablish the influence of foreign capital as a means of exploiting Poland. The strong anti-Soviet attitude of the average Pole is no complete protection against such propaganda claims, and so, unhappily, a large group of Poles finds itself in a dilemma for which there is no easy solution.

SECRET/US OFFICIALS ONLY

SECRET/US OFFICIALS ONLY

- 3 -

50X1-HUM

10. Latest information about the reaction of the Polish people to the Rokossovsky appointment gives another insight into the rather shocking passivity of the Polish masses. Many Poles are said to favor the open domination of the Polish Army by a Soviet official as against the indirect infiltration of Polish institutions by the Soviets which can be observed in other spheres of life. In the opinion of many Poles, Rokossovsky's appointment did not materially alter the situation in Poland. Bierut, incidentally, is said to resent Rokossovsky tremendously. Although Bierut well knows that his position is not the strongest, he has been accustomed to be at least the figurative head of the state and, as such, to be the first person on the reviewing stand, literally and figuratively speaking. He now finds himself dwarfed by Rokossovsky. Whereas Bierut is guarded by Polish Communists, Rokossovsky has a Soviet guard, although in Polish uniform.
11. It has been implicit from some of the foregoing that the Voice of America is not very favorably received in Poland. British broadcasts, on the other hand, still command a good deal of respect. [redacted] many Poles wrongly assume that the BBC is a vehicle not so much of British propaganda as of propaganda directed by the Polish Government in exile. 50X1-HUM

- end -

SECRET/US OFFICIALS ONLY